

In The Drawings

The attached sheet of drawings includes annotated changes to Figs. 3 and 5. Specifically, the setscrews have been identified. A new set of figures will be forwarded to the draftsperson under separate cover.

Attachment: Annotated Sheets Showing Changes

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the thoroughness with which the Examiner has examined the above-identified application. Reconsideration is requested in view of the amendments above and the remarks below.

Drawings objections

The Examiner has objected to the drawings under 37 C.F.R. § 1.83(a) to the extent that the drawings do not show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. Specifically, the Examiner states that there are two mounting pins, as well as the multiple tapered tip set screws omitted from the drawings. Applicants concur. Applicants respectfully note that claim 1 refers to mounting pins in contact with the blades for pressably securing the blades to the blade retaining plate. In the specification, these mounting pins are referred to as "long blade setscrews 6" and/or "short cutting blade setscrew 5". Applicants further note that these long blade setscrews 6 both mount the blade from the front of the punch plate/blade retainer plate 7 through screw holes 36, 38 at an angle perpendicular to the long cutting blade's surface, and that the short cutting blade setscrew 5 also enters from the front of the punch plate/blade retainer plate 7 through screw hole 37. Specification, ¶ 32.

Applicants have amended the claims to properly refer to these mounting pins as setscrews, and have amended Fig. 3 to include the setscrews.

Applicants have also amended Fig 5 to include the tapered tipped setscrews 53.

Specification Objections

The Examiner has objected to the specification because of the incorrect spelling of the word "stripper". Applicants concur and have amended the specification to make the proper corrections as delineated above.

The Examiner further notes that page 10 is the first time the phrase "cassette module" is used, and asks applicants to define the cassette module. Applicants respectfully note that the specification is replete with the phrase "cassette module" prior to page 10, to wit:

In a second aspect, the present invention is directed to a self-contained *cassette module cutter* for cutting elongated strips of material in a press to form predetermined shapes ...

Specification, ¶ 13.

In a third aspect, the present invention is directed to a method of cutting elongated strip material comprising: marking the elongated strip material with linear measurements of locations for corner cuts and end cuts; attaching at least one end cut *cassette module* in a press, the at least one end cut *cassette module* including a plurality of slots for holding at least one cutting blade ...

Specification, ¶ ____.

The cassette type material cutter is a self-contained cutter assembly that can be fitted to a manual or automated press, such as an arbor press. The *cassette cutter module* is capable of making specific cuts and easily configurable for different types of cuts. Each *cassette cutter module* is developed as a single, self-contained unit containing all the necessary elements for cutting. Importantly, the *cassette module cutter* is designed to make multiple cuts simultaneously.

Specification, ¶ 14.

The preferred embodiment of the present invention defines a modular design for press cutting material shaped in elongated strips. A blade retention system is employed in a *cassette module* to retain multiple piece blade sections for making complex configuration cuts.

Specification, ¶ 26.

Fig. 1 shows a front view of one embodiment of the cassette cutter tool of the present invention. This *cassette module* is used for an end cut in a gasket, and is referred to as an end cutter.

Specification, ¶ 29.

Fig. 3 is a top view of the punch plate/blade retainer plate 7 for the end cutter *cassette module*.

Specification, ¶ 32.

The cassette module is used interchangeably with cassette cutter module, cassette module cutter, and is cassette cutter tool. See, e.g., Specification, ¶¶ 26 and 29. The cassette module is the apparatus described by Fig. 1.

The Examiner asks, "[I]f the cassette module is the entire apparatus, why do the blades pull up after the entire apparatus is already expanded?" Applicants respectfully submit that an expanded cassette module refers to the separation of the top portion of the cassette cutter (module) and the bottom portion of the cassette cutter (module). See, Specification, ¶ 37.

The Examiner further asks, "[H]ow does the stripper hold the material down and in shape? Based on the drawings it appears the material can travel the height of the lower guards before it is forcibly removed, and it does not appear the stripper therefore aids in keeping the material in shape."

The stripper is made to fit over the cutter base plate and material cradle, and both lower shields. In this manner, the stripper aids in keeping the material in place when the blades are extracted. "The [stripper] 12 is preferable made of a hard material, such as tool steel or the like, and is made to fit over the cutter base plate/material cradle 13. In this embodiment, it also fits over both lower shields 17, 20." Specification, ¶ 37; Fig. 2.

The Examiner notes that the tapered tipped setscrews 53 are not shown in Fig. 5. Applicants concur and have amended Fig. 5 to include these setscrews. An annotated figure is submitted herewith, and a formal drawing is being submitted to the draftsperson under separate cover.

The Examiner also notes that the word "arrangement" is misspelled in paragraph 42. Applicants have seen to this correction.

Claim objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 4 and 5 because certain informalities. The Examiner states claims 4 and 5 both reference the use of multiple tapered tipped setscrews when the elected embodiment only uses a single tapered setscrew. Applicants respectfully

disagree. Claim 4 refers to a single tapered setscrew, while claim 5 refers to multiple flat tipped setscrews. Fig. 3 depicts screw holes for multiple setscrews 5 and 6.

A taper tipped setscrew 5 when tightened into screw hole 37 presses flexing wedge 40 against the short cutting blade 9 securing it in slot 32. The blade retention for the long cutting blade 8 uses two setscrews 6 which both have the tips ground flat. The long blade setscrews 6 both mount the blade from the front of the punch plate/blade retainer plate 7 through screw holes 36, 38 at an angle perpendicular to the long cutting blade's surface. Specification, ¶ 32 (emphasis added).

Applicants have amended claim 4 to refer to a single tapered tipped setscrew, and claim 5 to two flat tipped setscrews.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1-6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for non-enablement. Specifically, the Examiner questions the use of the mounting pins. Applicants appreciate the Examiner's confusion. Applicants have corrected the claims to properly refer to setscrews for holding the blades in place.

The mounting pins are used to attach the adapter pressure plate 3 and blade retainer plate 7.

The top portion of the cassette cutter includes an adapter pressure plate 3 mounted using an adapter pressure plate mounting pin 1 and mounting screws 2. Preferably, four mounting screws are used to mount the adapter pressure plate 3, although any number and geometric placement that provides uniform force may be used. Mounting pin 1 is used to attach the blade retainer plate 7 to the ram of the press through the adapter pressure plate 3. The mounting pin 1 is press fit into the adapter pressure plate 3, which in turn is screwed to the punch plate/blade retainer plate 7. Specification, ¶ 29.

The Examiner is correct. The mounting pins are not used to specifically hold the blades in place; rather, the setscrews are used for that purpose.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gifford, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,546,833) in view of Smithwick (U.S. Patent No. 6,209,436),

and further in view of Raney, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,871,571). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Gifford teaches a die cutting press for precision cutting of individual part-defining areas from longitudinal and laterally arranged rows of part areas of a relatively thin substrate. Gifford attempts to address the problem of cutting individual parts from a sheet or web substrate in which the individual part-defining areas are arranged as rows extending along the web or sheet as well as across the sheet. Gifford, col. 2, ll.26-32. The die cutting press of Gifford is specifically designed to process sheets or webs having more than one row of parts to be cut extending longitudinally of the sheet in the X-axis direction of feed of the sheet or web. Gifford, col. 5, ll.22-26. Gifford uses an H-shaped wooded member 78 for receiving a metal rule die 80 as its cutting tool. Gifford, col. 6, ll.28-32.

Presumably, the Examiner is using Gifford's metal rule die 80 as the blade retaining plate of the instant invention, stating that Gifford lacks only the at least one blade in the blade retaining plate. Applicants disagree.

Gifford's metal rule die 80 is attached to the H-shaped wooded member 78, and is pressed against the thin substrate material in order to cut in either a longitudinal or lateral direction. Since the substrate material is thin, a metal rule die can be used to cut clear through the substrate. This is not true of the gasket material that the present invention is designed for cutting. A larger blade is required and would not be supported by Gifford's metal rule die.

Furthermore, Gifford's metal rule die is not a blade retaining plate as depicted in the preferred embodiment of the present invention. Gifford does not teach or disclose a blade retaining plate for holding blades. The present invention requires a blade retaining plate.

A blade retention system is employed in a cassette module to retain multiple piece blade sections for making complex configuration cuts. Importantly, in the preferred design, the blade sections may be replaced individually as needed to maintain sharp cutting edges. Specification, ¶ 26.

The Gifford design cannot retain multiple piece blade sections for making complex configuration cuts. Nor can the Gifford design accommodate the replacement of individual blades in a blade arrangement. The Gifford design would require

Moreover, the blades traverse through a stripper, which is not part of the Gifford design. The stripper of the present invention is made to fit over the cutter base plate and material cradle, and both lower shields. The stripper keeps the material in place when the blades are extracted. Specification, ¶ 37.

Additionally, as the Examiner notes, Gifford does not provide screws to secure blades in a blade retaining plate. Gifford has no need for setscrews since it uses a metal rule die to form its cutting edge. In this regard, the Examiner combines Gifford with Smithwick to provide screw type mounting pins in contact with a blade. Applicants disagree with this combination.

Smithwick teaches a blade securing mechanism that is associated with a collapsible second slit to effectively close a first slit that holds a blade, securing the blade within the first slit. The slit 14 that holds the blade is slightly greater than the width of the blade. Smithwick, col. 4, ll.28-31; Fig. 1. The second slit 20 is spaced from the first slit 14 such that there is a defined relatively small run 21 between the two slits. Smithwick, col. 4, ll.43-48; Fig. 1. The blade securing mechanism is a rotary locking device 24 having a cammed or eccentric outer surface 26 designed so that when it assumes a locking position, it causes the second slit to spread, and in effect clamping the first slit against the blade. Smithwick, col. 5, ll.3-9; Fig. 6. Smithwick's rotary locking device acts on the die board 11. To the extent the Examiner equates the Smithwick die board with the blade retaining plate of the present invention, the setscrews of the present invention do not act on the blade retaining plate to cause the blade retaining plate to bend against, and secure, the blade. Moreover, Smithwick does not teach

setscrews in contact with the blades, as required by claim 1. In fact, Smithwick's rotary locking device is not a setscrew.

Applicants have amended the claims to more clearly define the preferred embodiment over the cited prior art of Gifford and Smithwick. Specifically, applicants have amended claims 4 and 5 to ensure that the setscrews are in contact with the blade(s) as required by claim 1. Applicants have also added a stripper to claim 1 as defined by the instant invention to fit over the cutter base plate and material cradle, and aid in keeping the material in place when the blades are extracted.

Applicants have amended claims 1, 4 and 5 of this application. Applicants are not conceding in this application that the claims as they stood prior to amendment are not patentable over the art cited by the Examiner, as the present claim amendments and cancellations are only for facilitating expeditious prosecution and allowance of the claims. Applicants respectfully reserve the right to pursue these prior and other claims in one or more continuation and/or divisional patent applications.

It is respectfully submitted that the application has now been brought into a condition where allowance of the entire case is proper. Reconsideration and issuance of a notice of allowance are respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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